Center for AI and Digital Policy

CAIDP Update 2.22 (May 31, 2021) – *US Defense Dept. Affirms Guidance for Responsible AI*

On May 26, 2021, the Department of Defense issued a new memo on Implementing Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Department of Defense. The memo carries forward the DoD AI Ethical Principles adopted by the Department on February 21, 2020, for the design, development, deployment, and use of AI capabilities. The DOD Ethical AI Principles are Responsible, Equitable, Traceable, Reliable, and Governable use of AI. The Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC) serves as the Department' s coordinator for development and implementation of Responsible AJ strategy, guidance, and policy.

Defense Deputy Secretary Kathleen Hicks wrote, "Ensuring a culture of ethical and responsible AI across the Department is a collective effort that requires strong leadership, robust governance, oversight, and sustained engagement at all levels of our organization." The aim is laudatory but there is more to the story about AI and the US Department of Defense.

The US National Security Commission on AI, chaired by Alphabet CEO Eric Schmidt and former DOD Deputy Secretary Robert O. Work, failed to endorse a ban on lethal autonomous weapons in the final report released earlier this year. As CAIDP wrote in a February 28, 2021 statement, "We are also concerned by the decision of the Commission not to support a global prohibition of AI-enabled and autonomous weapon systems. . . . our recent review of country policies strongly indicates support among democratic nations for limits on these systems." The 2020 CAIDP report *Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Values* found that, "The risk of lethal autonomous weapons was among the first AI issues to focus the attention of government policymakers. Although many other AI policy issues have emerged in the last few years, concerns about autonomous weapons remains."

In related developments, Professor Max Tegmark warned this week that killer robot proliferation has begun. Tegmark writes, "It's not in humanity's best interest that cheap slaughterbots are mass-produced and widely available to anyone with an axe to grind. But many world leaders remain asleep at the wheel, seemingly thinking that the threat is remains years away." According to the New Scientist, a UN report has determined that an autonomous lethal drone "hunted down a human target" in Libya in 2020. Human Rights Watch and other NGOs are campaigning for a "preemptive ban on the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons."